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ABSTRACT

This paper provides information for the use of leaders concerned with the development of proposals and recommendations for national policy consideration and by delegates to the National White House Conference on Aging. The first four sections discuss the nature of the need for meaningful roles and activities in retirement, identify goals proposed by previous conferences and groups, present information on the knowledge available with respect to the retirement activities of older people, and identify gaps in meeting such needs. The fifth section of the paper identifies several major issues relevant to improving the retirement activities of older people. The issues were formulated for the purpose of focusing discussion on the development of recommendations looking toward the adoption of national policies aimed at meeting the activity and role needs of the older population. A bibliography is included. (CK)

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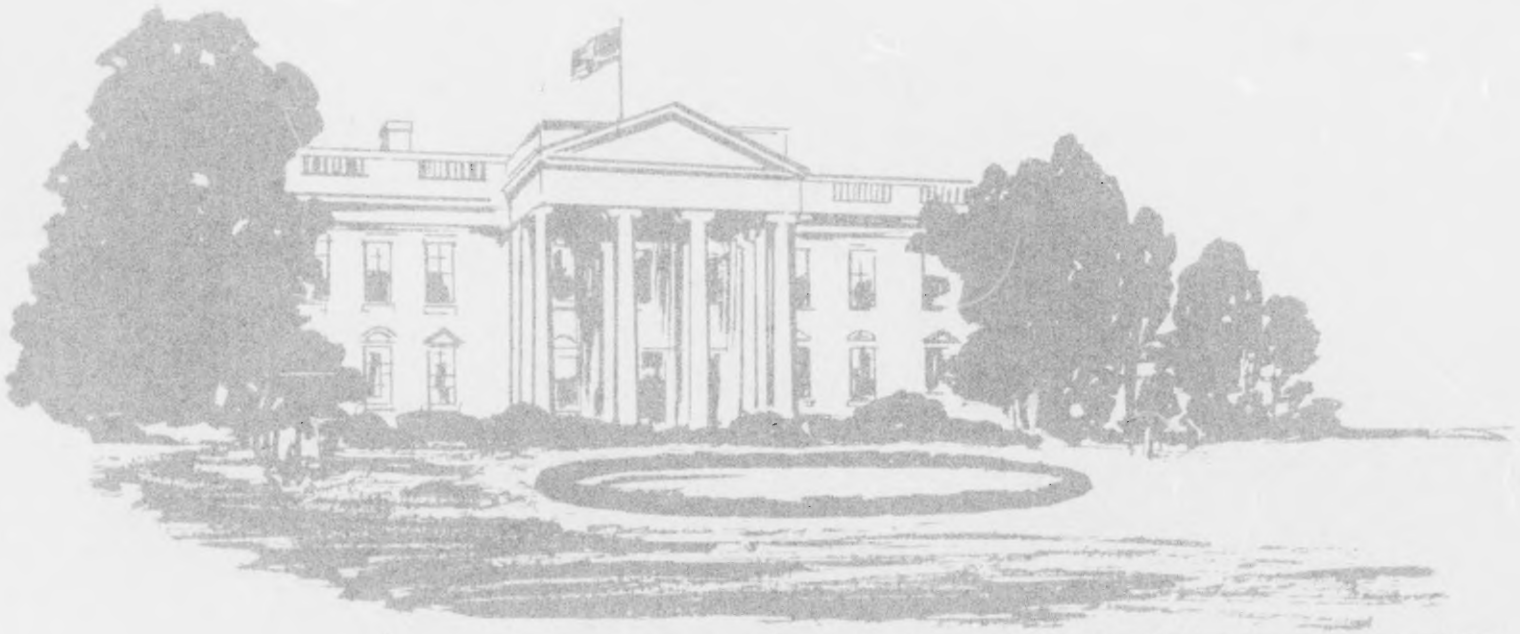
RETIREMENT ROLES AND ACTIVITIES



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1971 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

RETIREMENT ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

Gordon F. Streib, Ph. D.

ISSUES

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON RETIREMENT ROLES AND ACTIVITIES with the Collaboration of the Author

Walter C. McKain, Chairman

White House Conference on Aging
Washington, D.C. 20201
February 1971

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FOREWORD

This paper on Retirement Roles and Activities provides information for the use of leaders concerned with the development of proposals and recommendations for national policy consideration and by delegates to the National White House Conference on Aging to be held in Washington, D.C., in November-December 1971.

The first four sections of the paper discuss the nature of the need for meaningful roles and activities in retirement, identify goals proposed by previous conferences and groups, present information on the knowledge available with respect to the retirement activities of older people, and identify gaps in meeting such needs. These sections of the paper were prepared for the Conference by Gordon F. Streib, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, with guidance from the Technical Committee on Retirement Roles and Activities.

The fifth section of the paper identifies several major issues relevant to improving the retirement activities of older people. The issues were formulated by the Technical Committee on Retirement Roles and Activities for consideration by participants in White House Conferences on Aging at all levels and by concerned national organizations. The purpose of the issues is to focus discussion on the development of recommendations looking toward the adoption of national policies aimed at meeting the activity and role needs of the older population. The proposals and recommendations developed in Community and State White House Conferences and by national organizations will provide the grist for the use of the delegates to the National Conference in their effort to formulate a National Policy for Aging.

Arthur S. Flemming
Chairman, National Advisory Committee
for the 1971 White House Conference on
Aging

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for the Aging and Director of the
1971 White House Conference on Aging

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I. INTRODUCTION—THE NEED

"Retirement in health, honor, dignity—after years of contribution to the economy." This statement, taken from the declaration of objectives of the Older Americans Act of 1965, provides a general goal with which Americans of all ages can agree. But how can this commendable ideal be translated into specific expectations and actions that will enrich the lives of individuals or into policies and programs that will directly affect people? Clarification of this broad objective can occur only through a closer examination of the many roles available to older citizens once they have left the work roles and child-rearing roles that perhaps absorbed the greatest part of their attention in the early and middle years. These two role losses, combined with declining physical health and reduced economic resources, constitute the broad framework of the disengagement process that is regarded with apprehension and anxiety by many people as they approach their later years.

Society must be aware of this role loss and the necessity for role realignment and for new role opportunities. Goals based only on power and acquisitiveness, which were compelling in an earlier phase of life, are no longer appropriate. New ways must be found to use time and to enhance satisfaction and self-realization. This paper is directed to the need for a flexibility of life style—one that changes to take advantage of the increasingly abundant time that the individual has in later years and that permits him to engage in new roles, which he may not have been able to pursue in earlier years. Older citizens can fulfill many different roles to maintain a sense of personal growth, to enrich their social contacts, and to retain mental alertness.

There are four main reasons for the necessity for roles realignment in later life. First, for many there has been a loss of work role, which may have been the major focus of attention and activity throughout the person's life. The loss of gainful employment affects not only the man but also his wife, who must adapt to a lower economic situation and a changed domestic situation.

The second is closely related to the loss of work role—namely, the loss of income. The ability to engage in certain subsidiary roles that demand an expenditure of money may thereby be curtailed.

Third, retirement in many cases is the result of declining health. However, many persons are automatically retired while they are in good health. In either case, most older people find that as they age, their physical condition declines, and they may need to drop certain roles or realign or re-examine their roles.

Fourth, changes in the family cycle, many of which started in late middle age, are also a major source of need for role realignment. As children grow up and leave home, there is a shift in role behavior and expectation for both the father and mother. By the time retirement has occurred, help and assistance patterns may change, with aid flowing from the child to the parents rather than from parent to child. Death of a spouse or severe illness of a spouse also necessitates adjustment in the other partner's role.

The need for role realignment varies considerably in different segments of American life, for there are urban-rural differences, ethnic differences, poverty-affluence differences, and widely varying life styles. These factors, combined with the vast complexity of American social structure, cause confusion in the minds of gerontologists and others as to the optimum role for the aged. There is a tendency to lump all older Americans into one monolithic category and to search for one clearly defined, ideal role. This simplistic approach is factually incorrect, and unless this notion is altered, only confusion and misunderstanding will result, with many older people feeling that they are not "measuring up" to what is expected of them. Instead, we must

recognize the importance of different values, different capacities, different personalities, and different life styles. There is not one ideal role for older persons but literally dozens of roles.

The problem of role needs in retirement is further complicated by a philosophical issue that determines how retirement is viewed. On the one hand there are many groups and individuals who are committed to the position that retirement is the period of life in which a person "can take it easy." The pressures and demands of work are relaxed, and retirement should be a period of leisure earned by one's lifetime work activity. On the other hand there are those who subscribe to the position that a person should work as long as he can. If he is retired from one occupation, he should seek other full-time work. This point of view takes the position that gainful employment is one of the most important roles a person ever enacts, and thus that he should maintain the work role as long as possible; his skills are valued only if he is paid for them. Between these two extremes there are people who advocate gradual realignment of roles through part-time employment so that the older person is slowly phased out of the work role. They also suggest the need for new kinds of paid employment in the retirement period.

II. LONG-RANGE GOALS

Certain long-range goals pertaining to roles in later life have been set forth at various times by the work of aging conferences, State commissions, Congressional recommendations, and Presidential reports. For example, the First National Conference on Aging in 1951, sponsored by the Federal Security Agency, listed six major goals *(Man and His Years,* 1951). Those that are most pertinent to this report are:

> (1) Obtaining income and achieving economic security through socially useful and personally satisfying means. This help requires solution of economic problems associated with employment, vocational readjustment, and income to replace or supplement wages or salaries.
>
> (2) Spending leisure time constructively. To this end, emphasis must be placed on assuring the development of personal resources within the aged themselves, recreation centers and opportunities within the community, and more adequate knowledge of the interests and capacities of older persons on the part of those who work with them.
>
> (3) Achieving and maintaining positive and well-integrated social relations within the family and community. This result will require reorientation of the attitudes of the young toward the aged and of the aged toward themselves and toward the social group.

These statements of two decades ago are still as pertinent today as when they were written. In the decade following, these long-range goals provided the focus for many new programs and agencies to deal with America's older population. In 1961 the White House Conference on Aging restated these goals *(The Nation and Its Older People,* 1961). One of the new emphases of the conference was an awareness of the problems of the person in late middle age—that cohort of the population that in due time become retirees. There was a realization that older citizens should begin to anticipate their retirement and to give some attention to the new roles that they would enact. One of the declarations of policy for the 1961 White House Conference specified the goal of "assisting middle-aged and older persons to make the preparation, develop skills and interests, and find social contacts which will make the gift of added years of life a period of reward and satisfaction and avoid unnecessary social costs of premature deterioration and disability."

In the ensuing years the goals were further refined. Robert J. Havighurst, reporting for the Gerontological Society, stated: "The individual's goal in an automated society is the achievement of a flexible life style—one that changes to meet new demands and to take advantage of new opportunities. The goal, for a society responsible to its citizens, is to help the individual maintain a sense of personal growth by establishing and maintaining economic and social arrangements to provide possibilities for growth" (Havighurst, 1969).

The increasing realization that older citizens need help in realizing their full potential in their new roles is expressed in a statement of President Nixon's 1970 Task Force on Aging:

> Even if the income, health, and shelter problems of older persons were resolved, or at least ameliorated, the Task Force believes that significant barriers would still exist to the involvement of the elderly in the life of the community. Additional measures are needed. . . . A common thread which runs through all of the recommendations

contained in this chapter is that their successful implementation depends on the extent to which either business or voluntary organizations, or both, take part. The Task Force expects the Federal Government to take the lead in encouraging the growth of such a partnership *(Toward a Brighter Future For the Elderly,* 1970).

There is a special need to consider the roles of old people who are caught in a deteriorating neighborhood in the large cities of the United States and do not have the income or the physical or emotional resources to change their residence. Many of them are frightened to leave their homes even to go shopping, to say nothing of seeking friends, recreation, and meaningful activities. A recent study by the Community Service Society points up the plight of these elderly citizens *(Senior Advisory Service For Public Housing Tenants,* 1969). There is a desperate need for temporary home-making services and especially for social and recreational facilities. The study, a sample of around 600 older persons in the Bronx, New York, found that 44 percent said they had no close friends. In such a situation, city, State, or Federal agencies must provide assistance to help these people adapt to their new roles and to help them enrich their lives.

III. KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE

A. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The concept of role, as employed here, is focused on descriptive life roles such as parent, spouse, worker, retiree, widow, sick person, etc. Involved in these roles and many others that older persons enact are three basic conceptual distinctions: the normative, the behavioral, the interactional.

(1) A role is always associated with a position in a social structure, organization, or group. These positions are normatively defined, and these norms establish expectations for behavior appropriate to the role.

(2) The behavioral or performance aspect is what a person does in enacting a certain role or set of roles.

(3) Almost all roles are interactional, that is, they involve some kind of social exchange with other persons who are in complementary or conflicting roles with the person carrying out his role—i.e., parent, child, spouse, worker, supervisor.

B. ROLES OF THE AGED

There has been much talk in recent years about the role of the aged in American society. The lumping together of all persons of a chronological age—60 and over or 70 and over—is a meaningless categorization. Certainly for administrative purposes chronological age is an arbitrary but useful way of categorizing persons. For example, one votes at 21 years of age and can collect Social Security at 65. But once we move beyond the broad administrative demands and take account of the factual social realities of older persons, we must be more precise and specific as to role definitions and expectations. The specification by sex, by ethnic group, by race, by health condition, by socio-economic status, or by educational level is more significant in its social and social-psychological importance than crude age categorizations. Moreover, specification by particular membership and reference groups—relatives, neighborhood, religion, labor union—enlarges our knowledge of older people and begins to focus attention on the more crucial aspect of social life.

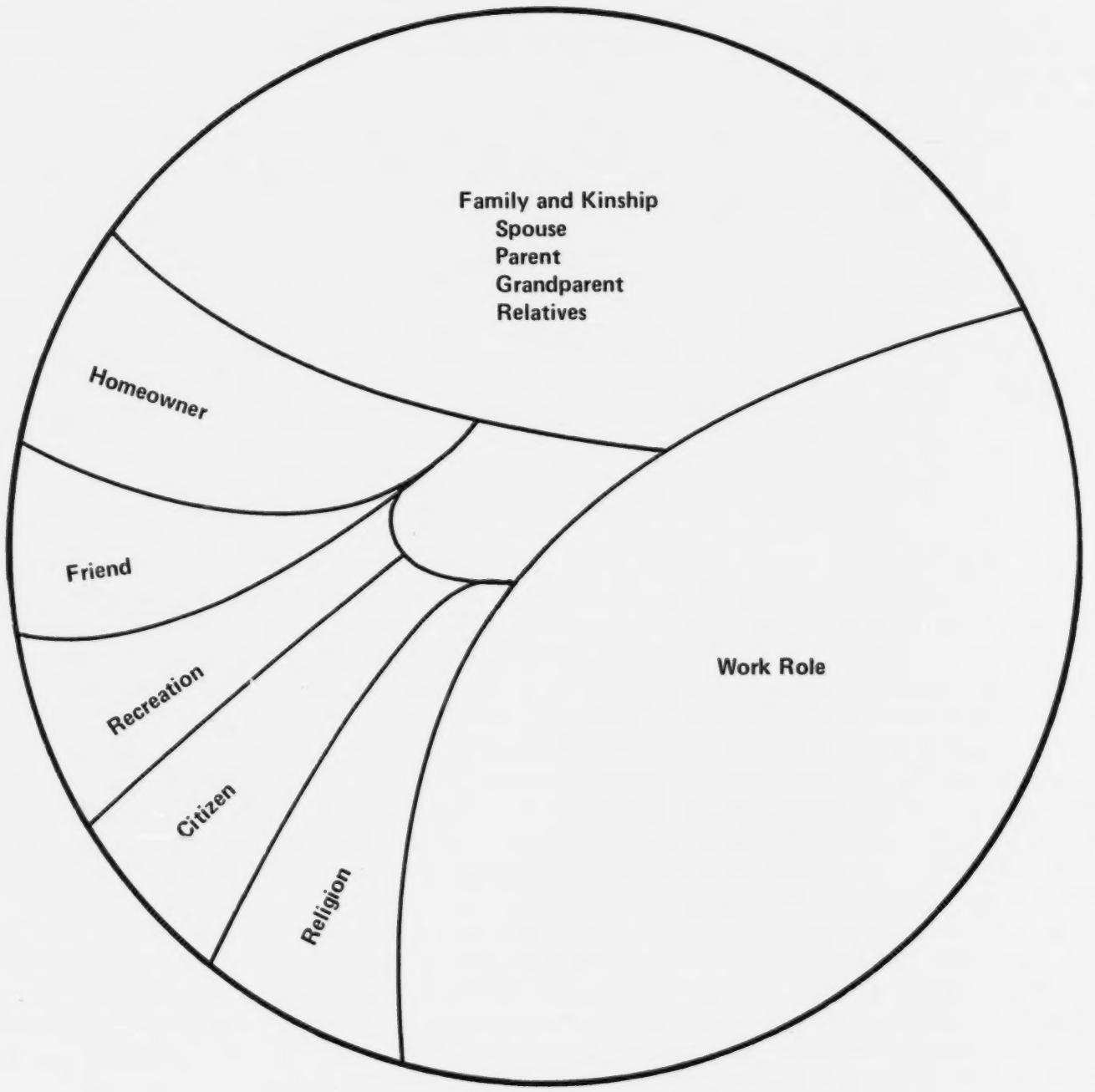
The problem of analyzing roles at any stage of the life cycle is complicated by the fact that the person has a number of intersecting and overlapping roles, which he must carry out, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes sequentially, according to expectations held by himself and others. The older person has a distinctive role set, which includes a complement of roles and role relationships such as worker, husband, father, grandfather, neighbor, church member. The increased specification of role concepts also includes (1) status sequence—a dynamic or processional aspect—which refers to the series of positions a person occupies over a period of time and (2) role sequence, which refers to role performance in successive time periods.

In Chart 1 we have sketched the role set of a hypothetical man before retirement. He does not have one role, but a variety of roles—family, homeowner, friend, citizen, church member, and, of course, worker. The latter role has been diagrammed to occupy a larger area of "role space," because in the preretirement phase the worker role is such an important

component of a man's role set. If a similar chart were sketched for a woman, the role of homemaker might occupy the largest area in the role set. On the other hand a woman who works outside the home would have a worker role and, in addition, a homemaker role.

CHART I

PRERETIREMENT ROLE SET

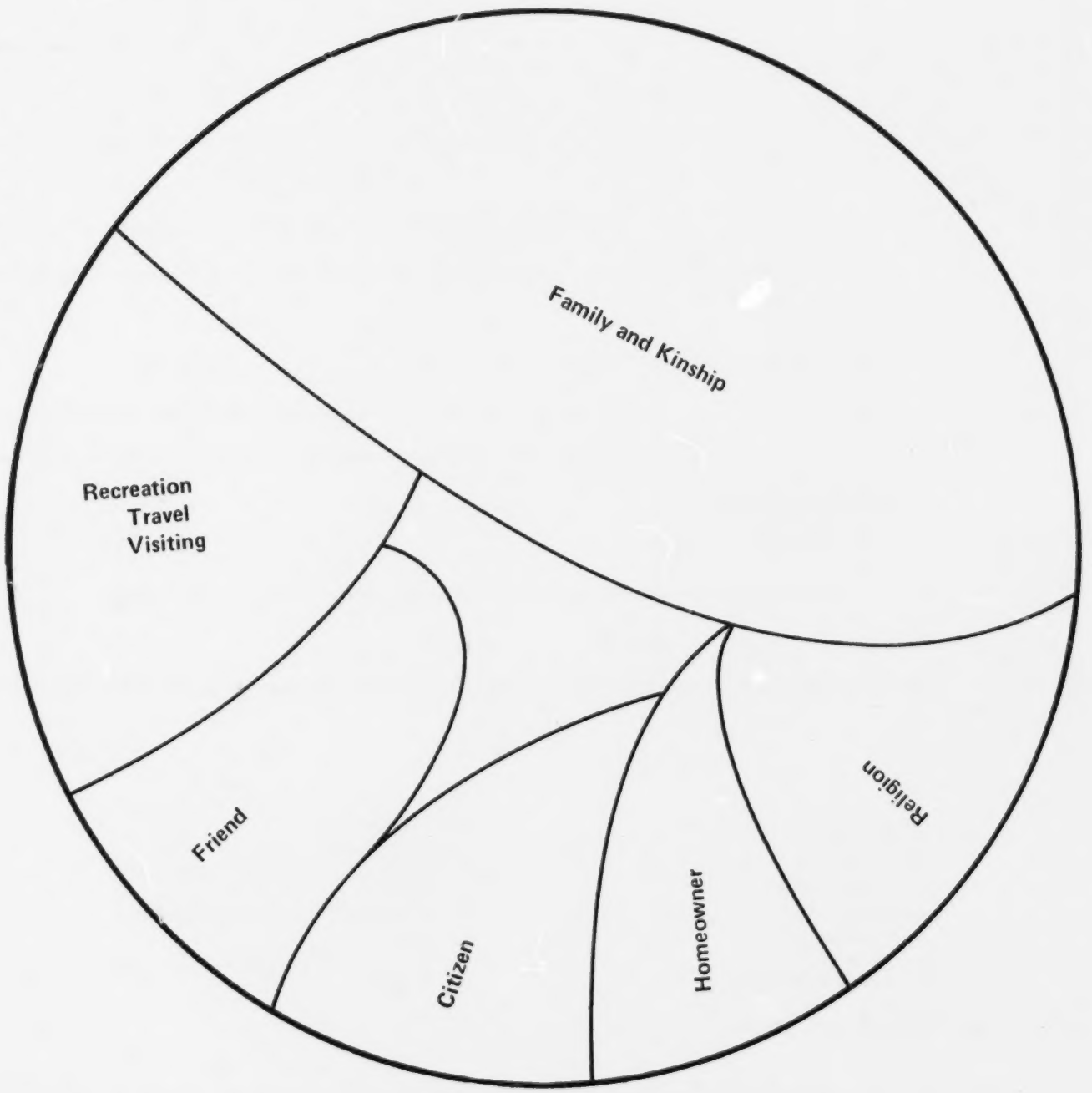


In Chart 2 we have presented the role set of a hypothetical retired man. Here the worker role has disappeared from the role set, but the other roles have expanded to fill up the role space formerly occupied by the worker role. Activities related to what we might call the leisure role have expanded and so has the family role. Similarly there has been expansion of role activities in other spheres. There is an opportunity, if one wishes, to expand the role in the citizenship-service area, for the person may not have had the time or strength to pursue such

activities while he was working. These are hypothetical role enlargements and will vary considerably because many older persons have great role flexibility. The point to be emphasized is that in retirement, persons do not have to endure a "roleless role" as so many persons have claimed. Old age can be a period of role realignment in which the person, in keeping with his interests, his tastes, his resources, sets new goals. He does not need to remain chained to the goals of former periods of his life, such as making money, wielding power, collecting consumer goods, etc.

CHART II

RETIREMENT ROLE SET

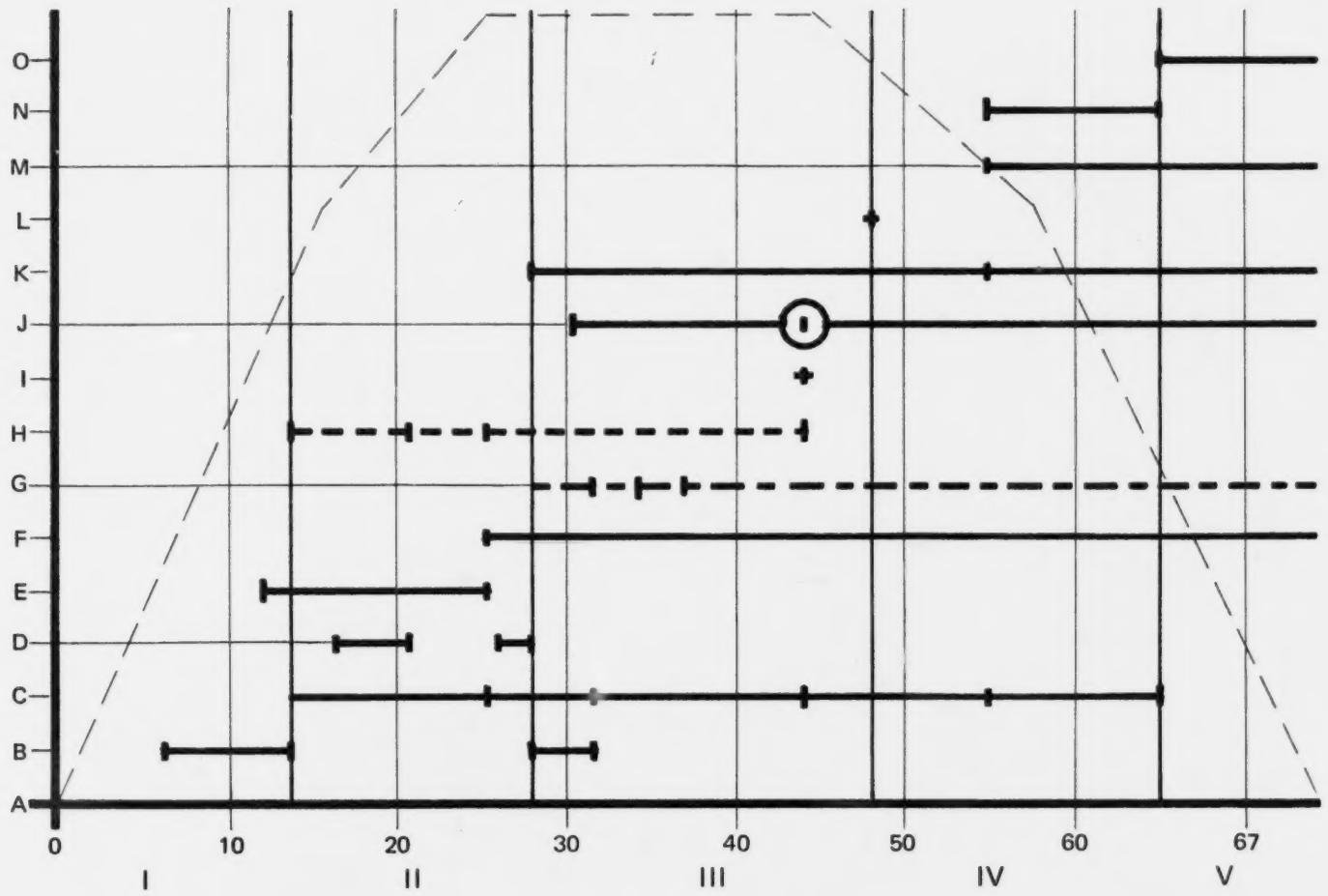


The older person has a distinctive role set that is shaped by broad norms and expectations linked to age. Our knowledge is limited in this area. One of the few studies of this

problem was carried out at the University of Chicago. These investigators stated the issue in these words: "There exists what might be called a prescriptive time-table for the ordering of major life events: a time in the life span when men and women are expected to marry, a time to raise children, a time to retire. This normative pattern is adhered to, more or less consistently, by most persons in the society" (Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe, 1965).

CHART III

SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF ONE MAN'S COURSE OF LIFE



A. years
B. education
C. career
D. service in army
E. dating
F. marriage
G. children
H. change in domicile
I. extended trip
J. owns his own home
K. church and organizational membership
L. illness
M. children leave home and are on their own
N. operates own business
O. retirement

SOURCE: Buhler, 1961, Fig. 12-1, p. 356.

The preceding discussion has focused on a person's role set at one point in time. It is important that we understand the processual nature of social roles and the fact that certain roles are of long duration (such as the role of spouse) while other roles are brief (such as the role of student). In Chart 3 a personal role chart is presented to show graphically the many

14 of

roles that might occupy one man's life. Obviously each person would have somewhat different time schedules for his personal role chart, and some roles pictured might not be included. However the chart does show clearly how roles undergo change throughout life—how some are of short duration and some last longer.

In the last two decades a considerable amount of research has been published on the role behavior of older persons. In order to give some coherence, we will divide the activity areas into three broad categories: (1) family and relative; (2) economic, which includes both worker and homemaker, and (3) expressive, which includes recreational activities, citizenship, church, etc. Under each of these we will present some of the information that has resulted from the large body of research data available.

C. FAMILY AND KINSHIP ROLES

There is a tendency in the popular literature to paint a bleak and pathetic picture of all older people as being rejected, lonely, and isolated—forgotten by their children and relatives. This picture is inaccurate and misleading, judging from the increasing amount of research evidence available. There are, of course, cases where a person has never married or has never had children or has outlived his kin. There are also cases in which parent-child relations have been strained for a lifetime, and it is perhaps unrealistic to expect a reconciliation when the parent is aged and needs help.

1. Definition of the Family in Old Age

A major distinction that must be emphasized is that between (1) the modified extended family or kin network to which a person belongs and (2) the residential family or the family in which one lives. Table 1 presents data summarizing the distribution of one, two, three, and four generation families to which older persons belong in three industrialized societies: the United States, Great Britain, and Denmark. The overall pattern shows a similar distribution for the three countries, for about three out of four older persons belong to kin networks of three or four generations. The United States has a larger proportion of four-generation kin networks than the other two countries.

Table 1.—Kinship Networks of Older Persons

Number of Generations in Family	Percentage of Older Persons		
	Denmark	Britain	United States
One	18	24	18
Two	7	9	6
Three	56	51	44
Four	19	17	32
Total number of families	2,435	2,485	2,436

Source: Shanas, *et al.*, 1968.

When we examine the residence patterns in the three societies of households that one finds among persons 65-years-old and older, we note that five household types encompass the most frequent living arrangements. Table 2 shows that the two most frequent kinds of households among older people are the married couple and the widowed person living alone.

Table 2.–Household Types of Persons 65 Years and Over in Three Industrialized Societies

Household Type	Percentage of Persons 65 Years and Over
Living alone, never married	4 to 8
Married couple	35 to 45
Married couple and married or unmarried children	7 to 14
Widowed, or divorced or separated, parent and married or unmarried children	9 to 20
Widowed, sometimes divorced or separated living alone	22 to 28

Source: Shanas, *et al.*, 1968.

These two kinds account for about two-thirds of all families having persons over 65 years of age. Thus in specifying the family in old age, there is a substantial proportion of "single-person families." Many of these older "families," while maintaining separate residences from their children or relatives, keep in close contact through frequent visiting or telephoning.

These two major family structures–the extended family and the residential family–as described above, are essentially static views–a snapshot at one point in time. What is more interesting, more important, and much more difficult to study is the dynamics of the family and its effects on the kinship network. When we examine families in the latter part of life, the distribution of the kin structure and living arrangements are changing. This dynamic quality is striking even when one looks at cross-sectional data for a broad age spectrum over a thirty year span, as shown in Chart 4 and Chart 5. For example, the most common patterns of living arrangements in the period beyond age 65 changes tremendously from what it was about 20 years earlier. Census data for the United States show that almost 80 percent of males 45-54 years of age and slightly more than 70 percent of the females in the 45-54 age category live with a spouse in their own household. There is a steady decline in this kind of living arrangement with an abrupt drop at about age 65. There is a differential, increasing over time, between men and women so that at age 75 and over, more than 40 percent of all men are still living with a spouse in their own household in contrast to less than 15 percent of the women.

These demographic facts are the underlying base for understanding the familial roles of older people and the role changes and role realignments that are an integral part of the family cycle.

2. The Marital Dyad

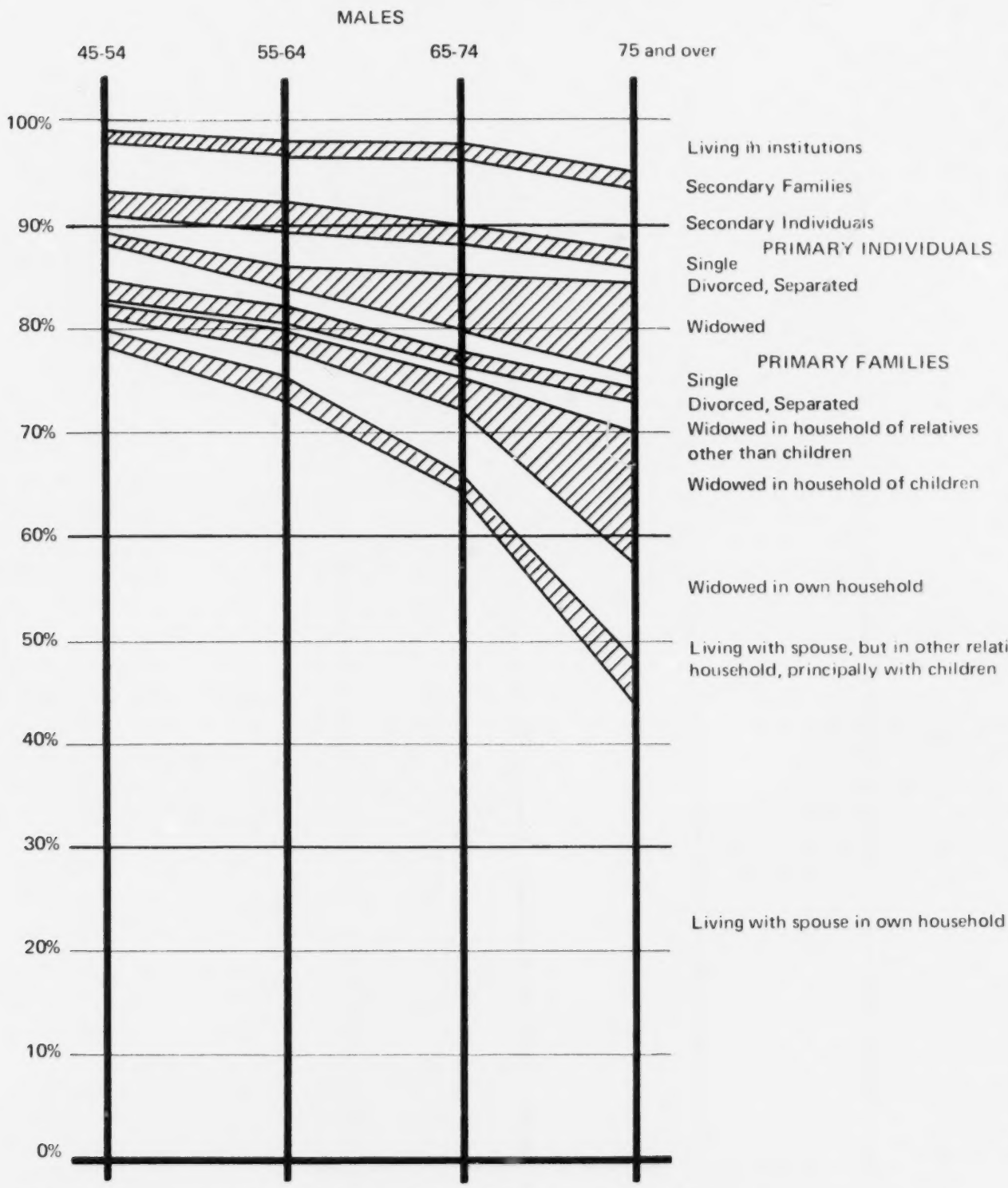
The basic family unit in old age is the marital dyad, for among person 65 and older, 53 percent are married couples (Riley *et al.*, 1968). A broad picture of all persons over age 65 in the U.S. shows that 71 percent live in families with relatives, and 22 percent of older married couples live with their children (Riley *et al.*, 1968). Intimacy at a distance continues to be preferred by both old and young as the optimum living arrangement for older persons, as married older couples prefer to live separately from their children.

3. Differentiation of Sex Roles

One of the fundamental observations concerning family roles is the clear-cut differentiation according to sex. Both men and women have certain tasks and activities (Zelditch, 1968). Although there may be some variation within the nuclear family system of the United States and other highly industrialized societies, the pattern is for the man to

Chart IV

Family Living Arrangements of the Population According to Sex Within Designated Age Ranges (males).

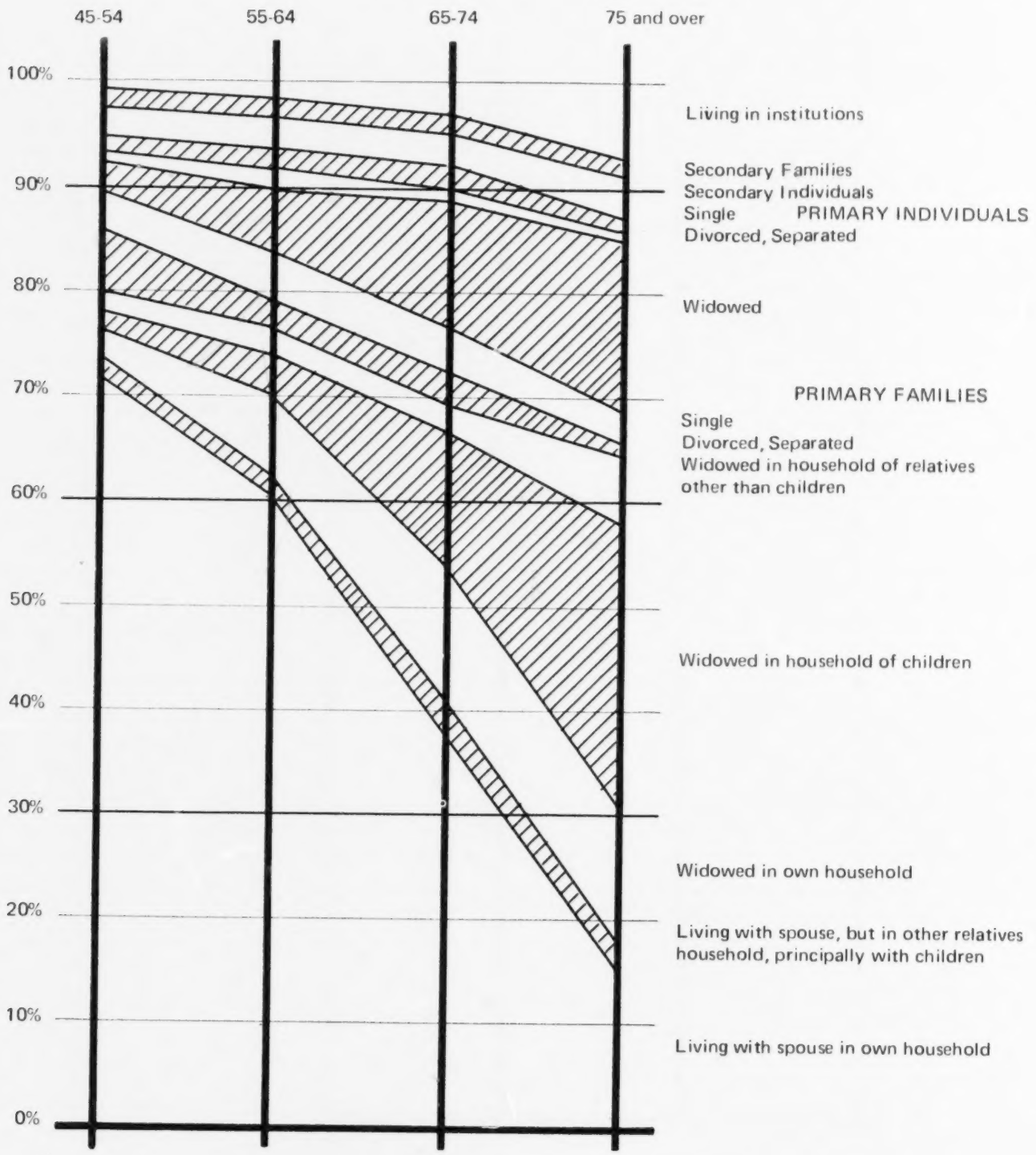


SOURCE: Adapted from Bureau of Census tabulations. *U.S. Bureau of the Census,* U.S. Census of Population 1950. Vol. IV. Special Reports, Chap. D, Marital Status, Table 1. pp. 2D-20, 21, 22.

From: Thompson and Streib, 1961, Fig. 7-1a. p. 186.

Chart V

Family Living Arrangements of the Population According to Sex Within Designated Age Ranges (females).



From: Thompson and Streib, 1961, Fig. 7-1b p. 187

"provide" for his family and for the mother to be primarily engaged in expressive roles: housewife, mother, teacher. There is a broad range of role activities for older women, and millions of married women work even when they have small children at home. The primary role of the male in the family is his occupational role as the breadwinner. He is expected to be responsible and support his family. The American family probably has a more flexible system of role allocation within the family than do other societies, and this flexibility is more characteristic of the middle income strata than the lower strata. American fathers over the years have assumed a number of tasks that traditionally have been considered to be maternal. Fathers may help with the dishes, perform certain "heavy ' household chores such as window washing, supervise the children, help with the shopping. This growing shift in role activities is probably a salutary pattern, leading to easier role adaptation in the latter part of life.

Perhaps the major change in roles that the male must face is that of stopping work and retiring. The act and process of retiring can have major consequences for husband-wife roles. Kerckhoff has found, for example, that men who take more part in familial activities upon retirement tend to be better adjusted than those who do not (Kerckhoff, 1966).

4. Widowhood

Another major role change that affects husband-wife relations is the death of a spouse. The role of widow is much more likely to occur than the role of widower, and so from the standpoint of family roles, wives are more likely to have to cope with bereavement and role realignment resulting from death than are husbands. The statistical picture is clearly shown in Chart 4 and Chart 5, where we note that as persons age, a much larger percentage of women than of men are widows living alone or widows living with children.

5. Remarriage

Another aspect of changing family roles is the trend toward more retirement marriages. Most of these second marriages result from widowhood and not from divorce. But whatever the cause, marriage in later life poses problems of role change and role realignment.

McKain carried out a study of 100 retirement marriages and reported a series of factors or conditions that tend to be associated with retirement marriages that are more successful. He found that persons who know each other well, who have the approval of children and friends, who have been able to cope with disengagement, and who have a stable income, particularly home owners, are more likely to have successful retirement marriages. As in marriage at younger ages, McKain found that personality factors are important in predicting success in retirement marriages. Satisfaction, stability, and adaptability are crucial. McKain wrote: "If the older person is experiencing difficulty in arranging his life to meet the reduction in his social roles, the added adjustment created when he remarries may prove too much for him. Failing health, the loss of a job, or a withdrawal from active participation in the social life complicates the process. On the other hand, if he is well adjusted to the retirement years he usually can take a retirement marriage in stride" (McKain, 1969).

McKain reported that the attitude of adult children may be a serious deterrent to retirement marriages. Rigidity of expectations concerning family roles is not found only among older persons. Some children were shocked when they learned that parents were planning to marry. In some cases the core of the problem was related to the inheritance of property. In others remarriage was considered an insult to the memory of the deceased parent. Indeed, "a negative attitude on the part of the children probably has prevented a large number of retirement marriages which otherwise would have taken place" (McKain, 1969).

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6. Parent-Child Relationships

6.1. Intergenerational Contacts.

Contrary to some of the stereotypes about the rejected old person, there is considerable contact between older parents and their adult children. Even though the residential family may consist of only one person, the modified extended family remains an important part of the older person's life (Sussman, 1965).

In the study of three industrialized societies (Shanas *et al.*, 1968), it was reported that most older parents (over three-fifths) had seen at least one child the same day of the interview or the previous day, and another fifth had seen a child within the previous week. The percentage of older persons who had not seen a married child in the previous year was very small (3 percent). The existence of an extended kin network in which parents and children are in regular and frequent contact with one another is a fundamental part of intergenerational relations in industrialized societies. The assertion by some theorists that the isolated nuclear family is the modal pattern is not supported by a variety of studies of the contemporary situation.

6.2. Reciprocal Help Patterns.

Adult children and their parents maintain a viable kin network involving mutual patterns of assistance. Small services are rendered reciprocally by each generation. More than half of the older persons in the United States sample reported that they helped their children (Shanas *et al.*, 1968).

The reciprocity of help—shopping, housework, babysitting, home repairs, etc.—as a form of kin assistance is an important characteristic of family role relations. Moreover the aged are independent of regular monetary aid from their children (Streib, 1958). In a nationwide study in the United States only 4 percent report receiving regular financial aid.

6.3. The "Empty Nest."

The postparental period is not a traumatic and negative experience for most families, in spite of the gloomy reports of the "empty nest" syndrome. Deutscher, in a survey in an urban middle class neighborhood in Kansas City, found that 22 out of 49 older couples evaluated the postparental period as better than preceding phases of life, 15 said it was as good as preceding phases, 7 said changes were not clear, 2 said it was as bad as preceding phases, and only 3 said it was worse. Those who said it was better mentioned a sense of freedom—freedom from financial responsibilities, freedom to travel, freedom from housework and other chores, and finally freedom to be one's self for the first time since the children came along (Deutscher, 1964).

7. New Child-Parent Relations

With increasing longevity and earlier retirement plans, there are a growing number of instances in which an older person must face the problem of taking care of an octogenarian parent, just when he himself is ready to enjoy his own retirement. In these instances, somewhat small in number but sometimes pathetic in their import, the retiree role involves assuming the parental role, vis-a-vis an older parent or other older relative. Perhaps some type of day care or overnight facilities should be developed so the retired person may enjoy some of his retirement, free from this new kind of parental role.

D. ECONOMIC ROLES AND ACTIVITIES AFTER RETIREMENT

1. Worker Role

Contrary to commonly held notions, the retiree role is not a compulsorily imposed role for many persons.[1] Palmore has shown that about two-thirds of the male retirees in a U.S. national sample made their own decision about retirement (Palmore, 1964). Over half of these men made the decision because of health considerations. Less than one in five persons are retired compulsorily because of age. Other studies have shown that over time, more and more people are retiring by choice. Inasmuch as so many people have voluntarily made the decision to retire, an important question is whether retirees wish to return to the worker role, and if so, what kinds of activities do they engage in?

For some persons, such as self-employed professionals, retirement is not a sharp break from their work role, for some gradually taper off their work load. Others shift to part-time work. But here again the importance of good physical health is underscored, for a nationwide study indicates that 70 percent of a sample of OASDI respondents are not well enough to work full-time (Palmore, 1964). Among the 30 percent who are well enough to work, only about 2 percent expect to engage in full-time work. Thus, when we talk about retirement careers, we are speaking about only a very small percentage of retired persons.

Nevertheless, there is a small and energetic group of people who successfully start new business careers after retirement—such enterprises as antique shops, card or book shops, tearooms, farming enterprises, beauty salons, etc. Some do it for economic reasons, some because they find retirement is dull and disappointing, and some to fulfill a lifelong dream.

There is a somewhat larger percentage of people who engage in part-time work on an occasional or a regular basis. Some retirees go into craft work—knitting, making art objects, woodworking, and the like—and sell on consignment at senior citizen shops or gift shops. Others are employed at seasonal saleswork, as at Christmas, act as traffic guards at school crossings, serve as homemakers for families with temporary needs, act as "pet sitters," etc. The types of employment are endless and limited only by the ingenuity of the retirees. For example, one group of senior citizens in Summit, New Jersey, have created a wide variety of part-time jobs. One activity is a Visiting Homemaker-Health Aide Service, which involves 78 persons who in one year worked almost 77,000 hours. Demand for the service has always exceeded the supply of aides ("It Happened in New Jersey," 1968).

2. Early Retirement

It has been stated that the United States is a work-oriented society and that most people are unhappy if they do not have a work role. Yet the fact that many older persons find it easy to give up their work role is pointed up by the growing numbers of persons who choose an early retirement date—at age 60 or 55—when there is not too great a financial sacrifice involved. The research on the United Automobile Workers (Orbach, 1965) and the later nationwide survey carried out by Barfield and Morgan at the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan (Barfield and Morgan, 1969) show that when older workers are given the opportunity and an adequate pension, they are likely to decide to retire earlier than the "normal" retirement age. While some may use this as an opportunity to try out a second career, many simply retrench in their financial demands and seem to prefer to "take it easy."

3. Homemaker Role

In discussing the economic roles in retirement, we must include the homemaker role for women, for it has definite economic aspects in addition to its familial aspects. In later

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[1] For a more extensive discussion of when and why workers retire see the Background Paper on "Retirement," 1971 White House Conference on Aging.

maturity, the husband may become more involved in the economic aspects of the homemaker role because of the tighter economic situation that inevitably accompanies retirement. The reduced income may cause husband and wife to spend more time in careful shopping and to perform household repairs that they formerly hired someone to do. Clothing may be remodeled or repaired instead of being discarded. Other retirees may rent out rooms or remodel their home to add a rental apartment when they no longer need all of the space. Some move to mobile homes for more economical housing and to have fewer housekeeping chores and lawn work.

The necessity to economize often provides a great deal of activity for older people. For some, devising ways to save money and cut corners almost takes on recreational overtones. They can expend time and ingenuity to make up for lack of money and still achieve a very satisfying experience.

E. EXPRESSIVE ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

The expressive role is one of the most important roles in retirement. It includes social and recreational activities, hobbies, creative expression, cultural and religious activities.

1. Daily Activities

In general, older people have more free time for leisure pursuits than people in the middle years. It has been estimated that over 80 percent of persons 65 and older have 5 or more hours per day during the week for leisure, and 5-6.5 hours on weekends and holidays (Riley *et al.,* 1968). A study of Social Security beneficiaries showed that more of the waking hours of a composite day are assigned to leisure activities than to maintenance activities--housework, preparation of meals, personal care, etc. (See Table 3.).

Much of the leisure time of older people is taken up by television; older persons generally spend more time watching television than any other single activity. Generally speaking, a majority of older persons have a favorable opinion of television (Riley *et al.,* 1968).

When we examine the activities in which persons of various age categories engage in a particular day, there is striking similarity in the broad pattern of activities. Table 4 presents information on the leisure activities of a sample of 5,000 persons 15 and older. Major differences are in the percentage of young persons who engage in certain activities (listening to records, participating in sports, and spending time at a drugstore, soda fountain, or bar) compared to older persons. There are some decrements as people age, but there are several activities that manifest similarities for most age categories: watching television, reading, visiting. Working around the yard and garden increases consistently over the life cycle, and pleasure driving slowly declines. There are several activities that seem to have a very low level of involvement beginning in the twenties and continuing throughout the life cycle: playing musical instruments; going to plays, concerts, operas; and going to lectures and adult education classes. The low level of engagement in these educational and cultural activities throughout the life cycle suggests that leisure roles and activities, like other roles, become patterned or habituated and persist for long periods of time.

The importance of television as a leisure pursuit for the older population indicates the need for further specification of the activity by marital status, by living arrangement, by age, by income, and by home ownership. There are some small differentials; for example, a slightly larger percentage of persons who live alone watch television as compared to those who live with others. A larger proportion of persons who live only with their spouses tend to watch television than persons who also live with other persons. However, age, income level, and home ownership do not have very much effect upon the proportion of persons who view television on a particular day (Riley *et al.,* 1968). The importance of television in the life of the older person suggests the need for a closer examination of whether television producers are aware of this specialized audience and its interests and needs. It has been found, for example, that there

is an increase in preference as persons age for "serious" content in what they hear, read, or listen to in the mass media.

Table 3.—Daily Activities of People 65 and Over

Activity	Approximate hours per day (excluding Sunday)
Total hours available in a day	24.0
Sleep	9.0
Obligated time	6.7
Meals (preparing, eating, and cleaning up)	3.0
Housekeeping	1.6
Personal care	1.2
Shopping	0.7
Care of others	0.2
High-participation leisure time	6.5
Television; radio	2.8
Visiting	1.6
Napping	1.4
Reading	0.7
Low-participation leisure time	1.9
Gardening	0.5
Handicrafts	0.4
Entertaining	0.3
Club and church activities	0.2
Writing	0.2
Meditation; worship	0.1
Walking; sports	0.1
Rides; outings	0.1

Note: This summarization, though suggestive, omits time spent in employment. Not only is the sample restricted to OASDI beneficiaries, but the overview also fails to take into account time spent by those 27% of the sample still in the labor force.

Source: Riley *et al.*, 1968.

2. Continuing Education[2]

Many persons interested in programs for senior citizens have stressed continuing education and advocated that colleges and universities make tuition-free courses available for older persons. Many institutions have done this, but the enrollment statistics are not impressive. Very few older persons are interested in taking college level courses. Although this problem has not been fully studied, the reasons for the low level of participation probably are (1) long absence from formal learning situations, (2) unwillingness to compete with younger scholars and disapproval of the "life style" of college students today, and (3) problems of transportation and convenience.

Some types of courses offered by Senior Citizen Centers have been well received, however. The Hodson Day Center in New York City, for example, offers courses in dramatics, languages, poetry and prose writing, public speaking, current events, music appreciation, and many other subjects (O'Neill, 1962). Perhaps some centers succeed in their education programs because they combine social factors with the educational experience and because the courses are shorter and less demanding. Courses concerned with arts and crafts are especially popular.

[2]See also the Background Paper on "Education", 1971 White House Conference on Aging.

Table 4.—Leisure Activities, by age

Activity	Percent engaging in activity on previous day						
	All respondents	Age 15-19	Age 20-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60+
Watching television	57	56	57	56	61	56	53
Visiting with friends or relatives either at their house or yours	38	46	41	40	36	33	37
Working around the yard and in the garden	33	20	24	33	39	38	42
Reading magazines	27	31	29	25	25	23	27
Reading books	18	21	19	17	15	15	21
Going pleasure driving	17	25	21	18	14	11	11
Listening to records	14	35	16	14	10	6	6
Going to meetings or other activities of clubs and organizations	11	11	9	10	11	11	12
Special hobbies such as woodworking, photography, and knitting	10	11	9	10	10	12	11
Going out to dinner	8	7	10	8	8	8	6
Participating in sports	8	26	8	8	7	3	2
Playing cards, checkers, other indoor games	7	12	7	6	7	5	6
Spending time at drugstore, soda fountain, or bar	6	20	7	5	5	3	1
Singing or playing musical instruments	5	10	5	5	5	3	3
Going to see sports events	4	7	4	4	4	4	2
Going to movies in a regular theater (not a drive-in)	3	9	4	3	3	2	1
Going to drive-in movies	2	6	4	2	2	1	0
Going to dances	2	8	4	1	1	1	0
Going to a play, concert, or opera	1	1	2	1	1	0	1
Going to lectures or adult school	1	1	1	0	2	1	1
None of these	7	3	7	8	7	8	9
Not reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total respondents = 100%	(5,021)	(392)	(806)	(1,094)	(942)	(731)	(1,022)

Source: Riley *et al.*, 1968.

3. Leisure Communities

Retirement communities have received considerable publicity in recent years as places where older people can concentrate on leisure roles. These specialized homogeneous communities serve a very small percentage of America's older citizens. However they are significant beyond the actual number of people involved, for they serve as a prototype of the leisure style for the later years of life. These retirement communities provide rich fare in sports and outdoor activities—golf, horseback riding, swimming, shuffle board—and in addition have many opportunities for arts and crafts, Bingo, dances, cards, etc. For those in good health who have enough money or who choose to sell their homes to re-invest in a retirement community, retirement communities provide a ready-made circle of friends and activities and a favorable setting in which to pursue leisure roles and perhaps to begin new ones.

4. Travel

As we have said previously, older people have more opportunity to take part in leisure roles than people of middle age, but there is great individual difference in how older people spend their time. Some travel considerably; older persons are more likely than the young to obtain passports for travel (deGrazia, 1964). According to the 1967 Census of Transportation, seven million persons who were 65 and over had taken a trip the preceding year, and 56

percent of these took two or more trips. (A trip was defined as going from their residence to a place at least 100 miles away or being away from home one night or more.)

5. Political and Citizenship Roles

In a complex industrialized society, citizenship and political roles tend to be differentiated from other role activities. Political involvement and interest tends to maintain itself almost until the very end of life, and there continues to be a slight differential between men and women in their political interest and participation. According to population reports, in 1964 a larger proportion of persons aged 65 to 74 voted in the national election than did persons 25 to 34 (Riley *et al.*, 1968).

Voluntary citizenship activities in American society have involved many women as well as men. Generally speaking, leadership in voluntary organizations of a civic and service nature tends to involve more persons of higher educational and economic status than persons of lower strata (Taietz and Larson, 1956). As people age, there seems to be a tendency for them to reduce their participation in voluntary organizations and in civic and service enterprises (Weber, 1954). This appears to be an area of great opportunity for role expansion on the part of older persons.

F. ACTIVITY THEORY AND DISENGAGEMENT THEORY[3]

In concluding this section on present knowledge of the roles and activities of the aged, it is pertinent to discuss how these findings bear on two theories of optimum aging—the activity theory and the disengagement theory.

The basic premise of activity theory is that "The older person who ages optimally is the person who stays active and who manages to resist the shrinkage of his social world. He maintains the activities of middle age as long as possible and then finds substitutes for those activities he is forced to relinquish" (Havighurst, Neugarten, Tobin, 1968).

Disengagement theory as originally formulated by Cumming and Henry states:

> In our theory, aging is an inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and others in the social systems he belongs to. The process may be initiated by the individual or by others in the situation. The aging person may withdraw more markedly from some classes of people while remaining relatively close to others. His withdrawal may be accompanied from the outset by an increased preoccupation with himself; certain institutions in society may make this withdrawal easy for him. When the aging process is complete, the equilibrium which existed in middle life between the individual and his society has given way to a new equilibrium characterized by a greater distance and an altered type of relationship (Cumming and Henry, 1961).

Damianopoulos restated disengagement theory in propositional form. One of his propositions stated: "Because the abandonment of life's central roles—work for men, marriage and family for women—results in a dramatically reduced social life space, it will result in crisis and loss of morale unless different roles, appropriate to the disengaged state, are available" (Damianopoulos, 1961). There are several issues in this proposition that require qualification and re-examination. While it is true that work and family are central roles for men and women respectively, the assertion that retirement, in the case of men, results in a sharp decline in social life space is not tenable for persons in many occupations. The disengagement theorist and the activity theorist incorrectly assume that work for many people is an interesting and stimulating social experience, but this may not be the case for many persons. They may

[3] There has been a continuing discussion of a variety of theoretical issues concerning activity theory and disengagement theory. For example, see Cumming, 1963; Maddox, 1964; Rose, 1964; Streib, 1968. A large number of empirical studies have resulted from discussion of the issues. The primary source for these articles is The Journal of Gerontology.

tolerate the social side of work with their associates, but the social aspects of work may be unimportant in the long run. One has little if any choice in the selection of work mates, and one's fellow employees are usually selected for reasons other than social compatibility. Damianopoulos referred to a "crisis" after retirement. The findings of the Cornell Study of Occupational Retirement show that most people do not undergo any crisis or loss of morale following retirement (Streib and Schneider, 1971).

A broad view of the facts concerning the roles and activities of older citizens seems to suggest that neither theory is adequate. While disengagement ultimately comes to all, people vary greatly in the degree to which they retrench. In contrast, while it is generally agreed that activity has a salubrious effect on health and morale at any stage of life, it is hardly advisable to urge older people to keep up a frenetic whirlwind of activity for its own sake—whether the activity is meaningful or not. Certainly the activity theory misses some of the richness of later years, for it seems to adopt the goals of the middle years—power, accomplishment, acquisitiveness, aggressiveness—instead of seeking new criteria for fulfillment.

Instead, we would propose that "differential disengagement" is a more reasonable model—that people should and do disengage according to their own life experience, personality, health and energy status. There is no ideal role to which everyone should aspire.

G. RETIREMENT LIFE STYLES

As people age, in general they enact fewer social roles, and consequently there is a reduction in the number and variety of their contacts with other persons and with their environment in general. This was the finding of a study in Kansas City of 200 healthy men and women from 50 to 80 years of age (Riley *et al.*, 1968). Similar findings have been reported in later analysis of additional information on these same respondents (Havighurst *et al.*, 1968). In broad terms, role activity is associated with satisfaction with life, a feeling of meaningfulness, a positive self-image, and optimistic attitudes.

Beyond this broad generalization, there are wide differences in the mode of adjustment according to one's style of life and personality. Both passive and active behavior can lead to satisfaction in retirement and old age. Williams and Wirths found that in the Kansas City sample, there were persons who were isolated and yet had adjusted satisfactorily to aging. In describing one person with minimum involvement, they stated: "He was in fair balance with his social system but at a very low level of involvement. Disengagement was no problem for him. . . . It is possible to be somewhat anomic, alienated, and isolated and yet cope very well, if one's style is one of Minimal Involvement" (Williams and Wirths, 1965).

In this connection it is pertinent to report the research of Reichard on how different personality types react to the aging process. Reichard and her colleagues (1962) delineated five types of retired men—the "mature," the "rocking chair," the "armored," the "angry," and the "self-haters"—and described the adjustment of each. The "mature" person is described as a "well-integrated person with some self-awareness, neither impulsive nor over-controlled. Freedom from neurotic inhibitions permitted him to enjoy life. His capacity for enjoyment was reflected in the warmth of his personal relationships. He readily assumed family responsibilities and was an affectionate husband and father, who also enjoyed seeing friends and valued retirement for the chance to spend more time with them." She adds that such personality types took growing old for granted and were not shaken in their basic self-esteem.

The "rocking chair" men also adjusted easily to retirement. They were described as a passive-dependent group who were unambitious, found little satisfaction in work, and were glad to take it easy when retirement came. Reichard said: "Why did these men adjust well to aging? Because they welcomed the chance provided by old age and retirement to take it easy. Society grants, in old age, permission to indulge needs for passivity and dependence that it does not grant young people. Thus they were free to be more truly themselves."

In contrast, the "armored type" had good adjustment to aging through a smoothly functioning system of defenses. They tended to have stable work histories and to participate actively in organizations. "The armed counteracted their fear of growing old by remaining active. Afraid of physical and mental deterioration associated with aging, they were happy and adjusted as long as they could keep busy. . . ."

An understanding of the variety of personality types reflected in role behavior is essential for those who work with the aged, for they must realize that the method of successful adaptation and role realignment of one person is not necessarily to be recommended for another.

IV. THE PRESENT SITUATION—PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS INVOLVING ROLE REALIGNMENT

The preceding discussion has presented research information about the various roles of the aged and has indicated some of the problems involved. In this section we will discuss some of the organized efforts by public and private groups to solve some of the pressing role needs faced by many older citizens.

A. PROJECT SERVE

One of the most imaginative programs offering opportunities for new roles and realignment of roles is Project SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement By Volunteer Experience), which was initiated on Staten Island by the Community Service Society of New York. Started in 1967, it has now expanded to other parts of New York State. This program was developed for the non-traditional volunteer and attempts to recruit older persons of lower socio-economic status. Three-fourths of the men and one-half of the women have never done any volunteer work before. Two-thirds of the volunteers never graduated from high school, and the average age is 71 years. In the first two and a half years, over 500 people were recruited, placed, and trained, and over 75 percent of these persons were still active in the program in August 1969 (Sainer and Zander, 1969).

The primary emphasis of Project SERVE has been on the needs and interests of the individual older person rather than on the needs of the agencies. As Sainer and Zander said in reporting on the program at the Eighth International Gerontological Congress (1969):

> We often tend to forget that older persons not only possess the general characteristics of the elderly, but, also, they are different kinds of persons each of whom has become old. So although it is undoubtedly true that there are some personal characteristics which can be attributed only to aging, any person, at any age, is the product of his life experience to date. And it is this total life experience which must be taken into account in planning a viable volunteer program for the elderly. For to ignore the individual characteristics of older persons is to ignore the life styles, social roles, attitudes and customs to which they have been acclimated for half a century or more.

In dealing with programmatic considerations, Project SERVE took into consideration the variety of older persons and realignment of roles. Flexibility and ingenuity are used in placing people, and the individual volunteer has a variety of choices. Among the organizations that have been served are: the Willowbrook State School for Mentally Retarded; The Grasslands Mental Hospital; Mount Loretto—St. Elizabeth's, a residence for disturbed girls from broken homes; the Sea View Hospital and Home; the Multiple Sclerosis Telephone Program; and the Book Restoration Project. Office volunteers have served in the American Cancer Society, the March of Dimes, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Staten Island Community Chest and Council, and many others.

One of the most valuable features of the SERVE project is the systematic attention that has been given to the problem of adult socialization—the learning of new roles. The directors of this project have developed explicit guidelines and procedures for recruiting, training, and follow-up for volunteers in new roles. These suggestions are particularly important because project SERVE is dealing with lower income persons who have never

engaged in volunteer work before. Among the practices they have found to be successful are the following:

(1) The approach to prospective volunteers must be clear and direct. It is most effective on a group basis. The presence of peers reassures participants and provides group norms and group support for the new role.

(2) The volunteer work must be concrete and visibly useful. The work should be in a structured setting and should be at specifically assigned tasks. This is consistent with the kinds of work many of the volunteers engaged in during their work careers.

(3) There should be an opportunity for the exercise of free choice in selecting the kind of work each individual desires.

(4) The actual volunteer service is done on a group basis. The volunteers thus become more involved and have an opportunity to discuss their work with each other. They should have a chance to voice both compliments and complaints.

(5) Reward and recognition are very important. Therefore newspaper stories about their work and other forms of positive reinforcement are necessary. Project SERVE has a newsletter that goes to all participants.

(6) The work must be arranged at a convenient time and free transportation provided. In Project SERVE, public school buses are used during their free hours. Volunteers receive a free lunch on the day they serve, so they have no expenses in connection with the work.

(7) There should be no complicated training—volunteers should be able to start right out with their task. It has been found desirable to follow up any absences, so that the volunteers know they are important and are missed when they are not present.

Thus, project SERVE has given attention to social psychological and sociological principles in recruiting, training, and evaluation. Its procedures could well serve as a model for other projects involving the learning of new roles.

B. THE FOSTER GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM

Another specific project that offers new paid roles for older people is the Foster Grandparents Program. It was initiated under the Administration on Aging and carried out with funds provided by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Marvin Taves, a sociologist, brought together in an imaginative way two sociological observations: first, that older people, particularly retired persons, have a vague and diffuse role in an industrialized society like the United States and second, that it is important for the young child to have sustained affectionate contacts with an adult. This idea was formulated by Taves and his sociologist colleagues Donald Kent and Clark Tibbitts and resulted in a program that employs low income people 60 years of age and over. The people were originally paid a minimum of $1.25 an hour (the pay has now been increased) to work four hours a day, five days a week, in close association with children under 5 years of age who live in orphanages and similar institutions. The participants spend about two hours a day with each child.

The program gives the older person a definite social role in the community, for he is paid for doing an important, humane public service. Furthermore, the child receives the kind of love, warmth, and attention that is essential to his growth and development. There have been many more applicants for the program than could be accommodated. The project has

now been transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. As of October 1968, there were 68 projects functioning in 170 institutions in 40 states. During that year, 20,000 children were served (Nash, 1968).

In summary, the Foster Grandparent Program has had a positive effect upon the psycho-social adjustment of the older persons who have taken part (Rybeck *et al.,* 1968). Furthermore, the effect upon the needy children has been to offer a vital remedial relationship, on a one-to-one basis, with a warm and concerned adult (Thompson, 1969). The Foster Grandparent Program has made a major contribution to the social service agencies and to the community in general (Nash, 1968).

C. SENIOR CITIZEN CENTERS

The opportunity for older persons to develop new roles and to realign old roles and role demands has been fostered by the development of multi-purpose Senior Citizen Centers (Cutter *et al.,* 1961; O'Neil, 1962; Tryon, 1961). It is less than 30 years since the first of these centers was established in New York City. At the start of the senior center "movement" there tended to be an emphasis on providing opportunities and facilities for recreational roles. However the centers have broadened their scope considerably so that new role opportunities now include educational and cultural pursuits. Some centers have begun to enlarge their efforts so that they offer opportunities for older persons who are housebound and isolated and thus are not able to take advantage of the program offered at the centers. The senior centers are important because of the new role opportunities that they provide and also because they provide a meeting place to discuss a variety of community ideas and issues, particularly those involving older Americans. Further, they may serve as recruiting sites at which older persons can be contacted and trained to engage in new roles in the area of community service.

In 1966 there were 340 centers listed in the directory published by the Administration on Aging and the National Council on Aging. The most recent directory published in January 1970 by the Administration on Aging lists more than 1,200 senior centers. The typical center had programs involving three or four recreational activities and one or two community services or counseling programs. Less than half of the centers provided all three activities: recreation, counseling, and community service. Moreover, only about one-third of the centers had full-time directors. Senior citizens centers have become such an important part of the current scene that U.S. Commissioner on Aging John B. Martin has written: "In time, the senior center may come to hold a place in the older person's life equivalent to the central role now played by the school in the lives of children" (Administration on Aging, 1970).

D. OTHER PROGRAMS

Another new development—which will probably continue to expand—is the growth of various forms of retirement housing for older persons (Walkley *et al.*, 1966). The emergence of specialized retirement living arrangements is related to other social trends that affect other phases of the gerontological situation in contemporary United States. These trends include: reduction in family size; loss of spouse, other kin, and friends; physical changes in neighborhoods, some of which is the result of forced relocation. Two other factors are of critical importance: (1) lowered physical strength, increased illness, and infirmity and (2) lowered income.

A variety of physical facilities are found in these retirement projects: retirement villages, retirement hotels, mobile-home parks, special care facilities for persons who are bed-ridden and those who are ambulatory, and high rise apartment complexes. The great variety of these housing arrangements is of interest here because of the opportunities for new roles and role realignment. The most widely available programs involve various kinds of recreational activities. Some of these activities require considerable expenditure of money for swimming pools and golf courses. Other are very modest and may only require a room or

rooms for recreational purposes. In general these retirement communities have not offered opportunities for role realignment, which involves supportive services such as counseling. Another major gap is the lack of continuing education opportunities. The high density of older persons, many of whom have similar backgrounds and values, suggests an unrealized opportunity for the development of new forms of role realignment.[4]

Another program that offers possibilities for role realignment and new roles is SCORE—Service Corps of Retired Executives—which was founded in October 1964. Now 184 chapters are operating, involving over 3,300 volunteers. As of 1967, they have served over 37,000 small-businessmen. The idea for this project originated with Maurice du Pont Lee, a retired businessman from Delaware, who was aware that a large number of small-business enterprises failed. He found that most of the failures were due to a lack of knowledge and experience and not a lack of financial backing. The SCORE program uses the knowledge, skills, and talents of businessmen who have had experience as retailers, office managers, accountants, bankers, sales managers, production managers, etc.

Another similar project is the International Executives Service Corps, which focuses on service in other countries. Most of the volunteers in this program are retired persons. They have engaged in 400 projects in a large number of other countries, especially developing nations, and have a program similar to that of SCORE. For example, the retired manager of a glass company has traveled around the world, advising developing nations on glass manufacture. There are over 2,000 volunteers on the Corps' list in New York City alone.

VISTA also uses senior citizens, who serve by living and working in poverty areas. Another example of the use of older citizens is in Dade County, Florida, where persons over 55 have served as teacher aides in industrial arts and other classes. Still another project, financed by the Older Americans Act, enlists older persons to serve as library aides in a 14 county area in Vermont. The aides not only perform a much needed community service but also supplement their meager incomes.

Still other opportunities for role realignment are Operation Green Thumb and Green Light, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. These two programs offer limited employment to persons who are aged 55 and over, live in rural areas, and have low incomes. The Green Thumb program employs retired farmers for three days a week to beautify public areas. They may earn up to $1,500 per year and are paid the Federal minimum wage. The program was operating in 15 states in June 1970. The Green Light program started in 1967 as an employment program for women and operated in 11 states. The Green Light workers are aides in community service and offer assistance to the handicapped, sick, elderly, and shut-ins.

The Teachers Corps is composed of experienced retired teachers. It is designed to improve the educational opportunities of disadvantaged children. Still another program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and administered by the National Council of Senior Citizens, is Senior Aides. Low income persons over 55 may work 20 hours a week and are paid the Federal minimum wage. They work in urban areas in a wide variety of jobs—child care, adult education, health, and homemaker services.

[4]A thorough study of role losses, reference groups, and role adaptation in relation to age-concentration in a large city is found in Rosow, 1967.

V. ISSUES

Issue 1.

Does society, through governmental and private voluntary orgainzations, have a responsibility for developing new roles for older people and providing opportunities and resources to engage in these roles? Or should society leave older people to their own initiative and resources to develop and pursue appropriate retirement roles?

One point of view is that retirement is a period of earned freedom from the pursuit of assigned roles; hence, the retiree should be relieved of further constraints that might be imposed through societal expectations or role assignments. Thus freed, the individual would presumably seek opportunities to engage in activities which might suit his interests, and hope to achieve the degree of satisfaction and status his personality demands. People who are prepared for retirement, sensitized to their needs, and have great inner resources can take the initiative and adapt to new roles.

The other point of view is that many individuals approaching retirement are unprepared and may require help from an understanding community. Experience shows that these people are not likely to find satisfaction unless society through govermental and private agencies assumes major responsibility for developing new expectations for them, encourages their acceptance of positive social roles, and provides suitable recognition or reward for their performance in them. If an individual has undeveloped inner resources through his prolonged orientation to work culture, he is left dependent on external resources at retirement. Thus, it is argued that society must assume some responsibility for developing expectations for him, encouraging the acceptance of positive social roles, and providing suitable rewards and recognition for his performance in them.

The resolution of this issue will help to clarify society's attitude toward time, the "use" of time, and the meaning of retirement in American culture. The old workaday attitudes toward time and use of time are no longer applicable to most retirees. For some they may seriously interfere with a healthy adaptation to retirement. The retiree must realize that leisure and relaxation no longer has to be "earned" or "deserved."

In the development of new roles the emphasis must be placed on role opportunities. Both the elderly and the community stand to lose when the talents and capacities of the elderly are allowed to atrophy. Evidence indicates that lack of opportunity is the outstanding obstacle for many old people whether they live in rural areas, in small towns, or in large cities. Older persons in relatively good health may have abilities which are going to waste because of lack of community effort to organize and make use of their interests and abilities. Some of these persons would like to find opportunities and outlets for their energies.

At the same time there are many retired people who do not even recognize the need for role realignment. They can be reached only by active recruitment. These older persons would benefit greatly in health and in improved morale if the opportunities were brought to their attention and they could be persuaded to become involved.

Some will argue that the provision of more role opportunities for the aged will entail additional public expenditures. Others point out that the positive results for the elderly and for society in general far outweigh the cost.

Issue 2.

Given limited resources, should first priority in terms of program efforts to meet role problems or to create new role opportunities be given to those in greatest need—such as the very poor and the most isolated—or should such programs be designed to serve all of the groups or elements of the older population?

For example, different ethnic groups, persons of varying educational levels, and social classes have diverse value systems. If programs are developed, they must be flexible so they can be fitted to the special needs and values of the diverse groups that comprise American society. Often those older persons in greatest need of role involvement are the least equipped to develop ooportunities on their own initiative and resources and, in addition, are unaware of the opportunities that do exist. Recent programs such as SERVE and Foster Grandparents have demonstrated the positive values in terms of psycho-social adjustment of providing isolated and low income individuals with positive, status-giving roles and of providing opportunities to engage in these roles on a continuing basis.

What are the benefits and costs of providing role opportunities for this segment of older people, compared to the benefits of providing opportunities for all types of older people? Clearly the less privileged may require more resources than the more privileged. But these benefits of different policies should be carefully weighed, and an attempt be made to achieve and accommodate the "role needs" of the largest number of older people. The two major questions to be answered are: What is the desirable balance, and how can this balance be achieved?

It is generally recognized that role opportunities have not been provided for the entire older population and that a basic need exists among particular groups for greater role opportunities. Some older people who desire to participate in the activities of senior citizens groups, old age centers, and the like face obstacles of poor transportation, physical handicaps, low income, and feelings of lack of educational preparation. How can society's policy makers on the local and national level be educated to these unmet needs?

Issue 3.

Should society adopt a policy of preparation for retirement or education for life off the job?

Assuming the value of a policy of continuing education, what institutional sectors of the society should take on major and minor responsibility for establishing preretirement programs? Does the older person's employer have some social responsibility to help prepare employees for retirement which is similar to the employer obligations to provide accident-free working conditions, first aid centers, workmen's compensation insurance, and the like?

What is the role of public educational institutions in preparing individuals for retirement and the challenges and demands of later life? In the past, the educational systems of the United States have concentrated on the needs of the young and their preparation for adulthood and careers. Certainly these are highly important socialization functions which must be carried out in a complex society. However there is an urgent need to take account of the fact that a fourth of a person's life may occur in the retirement period, and he may need special education for this phase. The public school system could be broadened to direct more attention to the mature person as well as the young.

It is also recognized that a "gap" exists between the time of retirement and the beginning of new role activities. The reasons for the gap have not been studied; however the lack of adequate preparation is certainly one of the major factors. A related question for which specific answers are required is: At what points in the life cycle should preparation be instituted which will result in more successful role realignment?

Issue 4.

Given the changing nature of kinship structures and living arrangements of older people, should society assume the responsibility for providing older people with supportive services traditionally provided by the family, or should society continue to foster family responsibility for provision of needed kinship services?

These supportive services contemplated might include transportation to doctors, church, senior citizen meetings, etc., dial-a-friend, meals on wheels, financial consultation services, and the like.

The issue raises two questions: (1) Is it desirable to promote generational integration and (2) What are the implications for the individual, the family, and society? Further, what are the trade-offs for the above three groups when society provides older people with most of the needed supportive services? Does societal provision of supportive services enable older people to be more independent, or does it foster dependency? A policy of greater societal support would be very compatible for many older persons who wish to have "intimacy at a distance" with their own children.

It has been shown and is generally recognized that kinship relations constantly change, often resulting in decreased family responsibility for provision of needed supportive services to the older members of the family. Also, many older persons lack kinship relationships and hence do not have the possibility of service and help from kinsmen. The fact that many older people find themselves in this position may indicate the need for society—through governmental programs—to assume more responsibility for traditional family functions. Thus, societal provision of needed services can have positive implications for improving the well-being of persons otherwise neglected.

There is a special kind of intergenerational relation which will be of growing social concern in the future because of the greater longevity of older Americans and early retirement. These are situations in which the older person must face the problem of taking care of an octogenarian parent just when he is ready to enjoy his own retirement. Attention to these kinds of situations is necessary so the retirant may enjoy his retirement free from some of the difficulties of this new "parental" role.

There is also evidence which suggests that when governmental organizations and private agencies contribute to meeting the problem of retirement, the net effect is the strengthening of the family and its support. Individualism and self-reliance rank highest in the value system of most of the elderly in the United States. Morale of the aged is raised when there is less need to turn to children and relatives for support. On the other hand, children and also relatives seem more likely to take the responsibility that they can carry when the complete support of an aged person is partially lifted from their shoulders. Thus in many instances the approach should be to *supplement* rather than to *supplant* the family.

Issue 5.

Should public attitudes and policy be changed so that acquisitiveness, competition, and aggressive behavior be rechanneled by policies aimed at a balance between roles of social expression or service to the community on the one hand, and on personal growth and fulfillment on the other? That is, given the demands of a technological society, how can the old find acceptance and reward in giving more attention to social concern and helping others of all ages who are not so fortunate in health or economic condition, rather than merely retraining themselves for their own personal economic benefit?

This issue has implications for both society and the individual. A change in public attitudes and policy, in the direction outlined, could result in positive contribution to the community by the older person. This would provide needed social citizenship services to the

community and would enrich the older person with satisfying and status-giving experiences.

The issue also has specific implications for the nature of new retirement roles and activities that will be developed—how are they to be shaped and in what direction? An important consideration is: how can society devise rewards for self-expressive roles that will make them as meaningful and satisfying as the work and parental roles they replace?

Roles traditionally perceived as being appropriate for older persons may need to be changed. New roles in areas of community and citizenship service or in political activity may become desirable. These can be very conducive to physical and mental health, can reduce stress, and can enable older people to function independently.

A shift in emphasis of retirement roles towards social concern and help for those in need at all ages will also have implications for public attitudes toward the elderly and could result in reshifting societal priorities. Moreover, a change in the attitudes and role orientation of the aged would undoubtedly result in some kinds of *rapprochement* with younger persons. The idealism of many young people and their deep concern with America's social problems might be matched by the older generation's concern for many of the same problems and issues. In short, the new idealism of the young could be matched by a new idealism of the old and could be a possible means of closing the so-called generation gap.

Our retired population represents that segment of American Society, aside from the very young, having the *greatest* amount of the *greatest* freedom. What can we do to make this time a benefit—rather than a bane and a bore? Large benefits will accrue to the total health of the individual, the community, and the nation if opportunities are provided to help the individual sustain or develop a sense of personal worth, a sense of social responsibility, and a sense of autonomy.

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